



Thomley Notice Board

This is the 4th edition of our "notice board" which aims to pass on information which we think might be useful. Please note that we cannot verify the quality of the services offered and recommend you find out further information directly from the organisers.

Development of a new centre for disabled children and their families

Swings and Smiles - will be an indoor and outdoor recreational facility in West Berkshire for all children with disabilities and their families. They are in early stages of setting up a facility very similar to Thomley, and are seeking support from anyone who can help them make their dream happen. See www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk to see how you can support them.

Training

Inclusive first aid programme - For people with a physical or mental disability together with their families, carers and supporters. Trainees can either do the whole course or choose from 10 separate elements ranging from Incident Management to Health and Safety Awareness (Accident Prevention). For more information contact Brian Dickety, Inclusive First Aid Coordinator. Tel: 01865 403327 or 07734 481588 or email BDickety@redcross.org.uk

2009 Autism related training workshops at Puzzle Centre (previously Puzzle Pre-School) Workshops will run from 10am - 12pm and are for parents (£5) & professionals (£10). To book, call 01296 733900 or email mandylawyer@puzzlepreschool.co.uk. **12th January** - Stress management; **29th January** - Statutory assessment, statements and schools; **24th January** - Managing behaviour; **16th March** - Creating play and learning opportunities at home.

Useful resources

Interconnections multi-disciplinary information service - Website which publishes upcoming events, including conferences, seminars, training days, exhibitions and campaign meetings. <http://www.icwhatsnew.com/eventslisting/index.htm>

Downs Syndrome - www.downs-syndrome.org.uk, new website.

Healthtalkonline - www.healthtalkonline.org, an award-winning new website established by Oxford University with personal stories of health and illness to enable patients, families and healthcare professionals to benefit from the experiences of others. You can watch or listen to videos of the interviews, read about people's experiences and find reliable information about conditions, treatment choices and support.

Transporters DVD - to help children with Autism recognise emotions. This unique Government-backed DVD uses a combination of real actors' faces and 3D computer-generated settings. The DVD pack is available from www.thetransporters.com

Oxford Disability Directory - a comprehensive listing of organisations that support disabled people, plus those that cover education and training, employment, social services and benefits, sports and leisure, transport and travel. The Directory is available from www.oxford.gov.uk/disabilitydirectory or from Lynne Hooper on 01865 252531 or by email lhooper@oxford.gov.uk

Campaigns

Disabled Children Matter in Oxfordshire - Oxfordshire has signed the Every Disabled Child Matters charter, see www.edcm.org.uk/making_disabled_children_matter_locally.pdf for more information. Oxfordshire Family Support Network has established a new e-group for parents and carers of disabled children in Oxfordshire. This group will give parents and carers a voice about issues affecting them and their families to influence decision making and raise awareness concerning the services that families need. The e-group will also be a place for information sharing, support and advice. If you would like to join this group, email Gail Hanrahan at Gail@oxfsn.co.uk, or if you do not have internet access, call Gail on 01865 890326.

Benefits

Benefits advice, support and help with filling in forms - People with learning disabilities (living in Oxfordshire) or their carers, can seek a FREE independent confidential benefits check through Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau. Call your local Citizens Advice Bureau for more information.

Contact a Family has released new podcasts which explain the main criteria for various benefits, procedures for claiming them, and where to get additional support, see www.cafamily.org.uk/news/podcasts.html for information on:

- **Carer's Allowance**
- **Disability Living Allowance** - for children and adults with extra care or mobility needs.

Incapacity Benefit is being replaced by Employment Support Allowance - Families with disabled teenagers born before October 1992 who have not claimed Incapacity benefit or Income Support should seek advice now. There is still a limited time period in which people can claim Incapacity Benefit, providing they meet the backdating rules. Otherwise, there will have no choice and individuals will be assessed under the new rules and rates for Employment Support Allowance. This may mean the household income from benefits is less than what could be paid under the original rules. For advice on these options, call Tel. 0808 808 3555.

Funding

Disabled Living Foundation - Sources of funding & obtaining equipment for disabled & older people. This website gives some useful ideas for funding (although perhaps a little out date). www.dlf.org.uk/factsheets/pdf/Sources_of_funding_and_obtaining_equipment_for_disabled_and_older_people.pdf

Family Holiday Association aims to provide holidays for families with school age children in desperate need of a break. The Association provides grants for one week's holiday for the whole family. See their website for more details. www.fhaonline.org.uk

The Family Fund - helps families with severely disabled children to have choices and the opportunity to enjoy ordinary life. The fund gives grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable. One of Thomley's families has received a grant for a second year running. For more information, see www.familyfund.org.uk or call 0845 130 4542.